Developing Bio-Control Agents as Pesticides

†1033. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that various Agriculture Research Institutes are engaged in research for developing bio-control agents as pesticides; and

(b) if so, the progress made thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) Various agricultural research institutes of the ICAR are engaged in research on bio-agents for the control of pests.

(b) Specific bio-control agents *viz.* parasites, parasitoids, predators, insect pathogens, nematophagous fungi and bacteria and weed control agents have been identified for managing insect-pests, diseases, nematodes and weeds, and commensurate technologies have been developed.

MSP for Cotton

1034. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the minimum support price of cotton fixed this year by Maharashtra Government and other State Governments;

(b) the Agriculture Costs and Prices Commission's recommendation in this regard, indicating the cost of production of cotton in different areas; and

(c) how far the farmer's interests have been safeguarded thereby?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) Fixation of Minimum Support Price (MSP) does not come under the purview of the State Governments, including Maharashtra. Based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the Government of India has fixed the MSP for the basic varieties of cotton F-414/H-777/J-34 at Rs. 1725 and for H-4 at Rs. 1925 per quintal for 2003-04 season. The C2 cost of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.